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OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

Washington, D. C.

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ISSUED: 21 May 1945  
EFFECTIVE: 21 May 1945

TO: List S

SUBJECT: Regulations Governing Retention of Classified  
Material by Members of OSS

1. All documentary material, such as books, papers, reports, memoranda or copies thereof, relating to OSS activities or personnel including such similar material as may be transmitted to OSS by other cooperating agencies of the U.S. or Allied Governments is the property of OSS and the United States Government and not the property of any individual, even though the latter may be the author or subject of it, or otherwise mentioned in it. The individual's temporary custody or retention of such material does not convey to him the right to its ownership or permanent possession.
2. All members of OSS are instructed, therefore, to examine immediately all documentary material in their personal possession and to return either to their Desk Head, Branch Chief, the Registry, or the Security Office, any material described above as OSS property and which does not fall within either of the two categories listed below:
  - a. Documentary material relating to current plans and operations or administrative matter safeguarded in accordance with applicable security regulations;
  - b. Personal letters, movement orders, or any administrative matter relating solely to the individual and not classified higher than RESTRICTED.
3. Attention of all concerned is directed to Par. 31, Section II, of entitled Safeguarding Military Information, which provides that "Upon change of station or separation from the military service, an officer will return to the source from which received, or otherwise properly account for, all secret and confidential documents which have been issued to him".

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4. All Strategic Services Officers and Chiefs, OSS, will:

- a. Direct all personnel under their command to comply promptly with the provisions of this Order,
- b. Notify all such personnel that the storage or transportation of secret and confidential documentary material in foot lockers, bags or other personal luggage will be considered a serious Security Violation, and
- c. Instruct all field Security Officers to brief all OSS personnel in particular reference to this matter.

5. All documentary material over six months old in the personal possession of any individual will be disposed of in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 above, and all documentary material from ninety days to six months old will be carefully screened both from an Operational and Security standpoint to determine whether its continued temporary retention by the individual is necessary.

*Handwritten signature:* William J. Donovan  
William J. Donovan  
Director

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